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INDUSTRIAL FATIGUE.

INVESTIGATION BY MEANS OF FACTORY STATISTICS.

A manual for field research in industrial fatigue by P. S. Florence, scientific assistant, United States Public Health Service, was recently published [1] for the purpose of summarizing the methods which have been most usefully employed in the study of industrial fatigue. It is the opinion of the author that the experience picked up painfully and wastefully by means of trial and error can now be taught as a body, logically and succinctly. He believes, too, that the crying need is for more and more investigation and hopes that all who can will join in research along the lines laid down in this volume, in order to strengthen the foundations and broaden the range of our knowledge of human fatigue and of its incidence in industry.

The events that can be observed and recorded in factories to throw light on fatigue are summarized in this volume as follows:

A. The output rate per given period of time.

B. The consumption of mechanical power at any given moment.

C. The rate of accidents per given period of time.

D. The proportion of spoiled work to output.

E. The proportion of sickness and unrest among the industrial population.

A chapter is devoted to each of these methods. The reliability and value of each method is discussed and suggestions given for the elimination of any ambiguity which may exist in the statistics.

Prof. Florence states that any complete investigation of industrial fatigue would fall into three sections:

A. Measurement of variations in working capacity.

B. Measurement of variations in length and intensity of activity and in industrial conditions.

C. Correlation of these two.

The greater part of the monograph is devoted to a consideration of the problems arising in connection with a statistical study along the lines outlined.

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[1] Use of Factory Statistics in the Investigation of Industrial Fatigue. A Manual for Field Research. By Philip Sargant Florence. Vol. LXXXI, No. 3 (whole No. 190), Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, edited by the faculty of political science of Columbia University. Columbia University, 1918.

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